

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant has reviewed and considered the Office Action dated November 7, 2003 and the references cited therein. In response thereto, claims 1, 19, and 48 are amended, and claims 25 and 26 are canceled. Accordingly, claims 1-24 and 27-65 are pending in the present application.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-65 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Jones et al. Applicant has amended claims 1, 19, and 48 and respectfully traverses the rejection for the reasons below.

Claim 1 recites a method for managing an emergency assistance system including interaction between an operator, a desired vendor and a customer, which comprises the steps of receiving incident information from the operator and storing the incident information in an incident tracking file; receiving first invoice information from the vendor; searching for and selecting the desired vendor using the incident information; and verifying the first invoice information and generating a bill for the customer.

Jones describes an integrated emergency medical transportation database system having a dispatch module, clinical module, administration module and billing module. More specifically, Jones describes that each module communicates data with one or more of the other modules to form a system incorporating data sharing, thus achieving an end-to-end automation of emergency medical care accounting. However, Jones fails to disclose or teach a system or a method of managing an emergency assistance system that searches for and selects a desired vendor based on incident information. Jones merely describes that a dispatch module on a server computer can be accessed via an interface to a dispatch computer that receives an initial call to deploy an emergency medical team, and that the dispatch computer can provide just a communications interface to the server computer so that it acts as computer terminal, or it can contain a portion of the dispatch module (Column 4, lines 47-54). On the other hand, the recited invention allows a vendor search and selection for a desired vendor, based on the incident information, to perform on-site assistance. Support can be found at least on page 9, lines 5-14, lines 23-28). One of the

advantages of the present invention is that the system and/or method allows to provide specific customer-related information, which may relate to cost limits, desired vendors, and any other relevant customer preferences or requirements.

Further, Jones not only does not disclose or teach searching for and selecting a desired vendor, but also teaches away from the recited invention by stating that upon flight dispatch, the dispatcher will receive the name of the current base physician, crew and helicopter information for verification (Column 6, lines 25-27).

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Jones, and that claims 19 and 48 and the remaining dependent claims are also patentable for at least the same reasons discussed above.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that this present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the present application and a favorable response are respectfully requested.

If a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues, please contact the undersigned at 612-752-7367.

Respectfully submitted,

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